NOTES FROM THE VOID

The A Void Collective Fanzine
Issue 9, May/June 2026
FREE

ON THE JANK

INSIDE:
Godzella
The Wot Now?
Broken Castles
Decadence
The Boilermen
Joy Disposal Unit

...and loads more

HIGH MAINTENANCE

OUR MANIFESTO

No one should be excluded from performing their music in public because of their neurotype, disability, age, or inexperience. A band playing their first gig is as valuable as someone playing their thousandth, and the age of a performer has no bearing on how good they are or whether they should be given good gigs.

Some neurotypes and mental health conditions make it harder for musicians to find opportunities and make networking an impossible task, which means the gigs don't come. We aim to remove that barrier.

We understand that some music is deemed too 'weird' to be given good gigs: that's wrong, they shouldn't be relegated to the outer edges of open mic nights - they should be on the bills at proper gigs, with their name on the poster.

We are a group of musicians from various bands, and we aim for full inclusivity, to give valuable shows to the people who are ignored by some of the gatekeepers. We stand against ageism, ableism, exclusion of any kind, and favouritism. We stand for the overlooked and marginalised.

We make each gig valuable to the acts performing, with long-lasting impact. We have an etiquette guide that makes the shows stress-free, and once the gig has ended, we do things for the acts who have performed, whether it's recording them cheaply (or even free), helping with instrument repairs, or enabling them to go and do what we do elsewhere.

There was a void, and we filled it.

Read the long version at https://linktr.ee/avoidcollective

Editor's Note

Deputy Editor **Andrew Slack** has something to say to you people

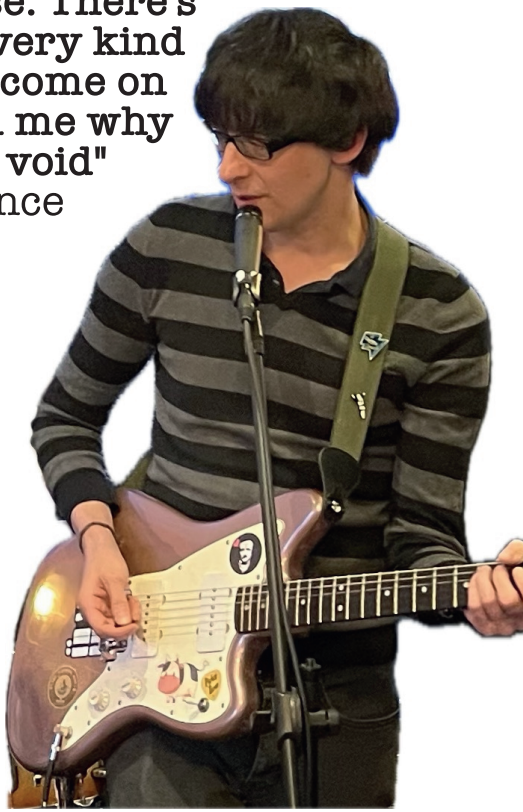
It's Issue 9 and Alex is taking a well earned break from writing these editorials so I'm up. Expect an amount of rambling. By the time this goes to print Voidfest will have been and gone. Future me hopes it was a success and we're writing about how great it was at the back of this issue. Present me is scared shitless and remains unconvinced by the prophecies of our resident Astrologer, Mr Kinesis. Terry, incidentally has gone on holiday to Lemuria for a month, giving us all respite from his pop trivia tinged doomsday scenarios. He will return.

In many ways Voidfest represents a culmination of all we have achieved as a collective. What started as a jokey idea of running something parallel to Twinfest, with names like Doppelfest, Geminifest and The Festival of Dorian Gray being thrown around, turned into something else entirely. To run the festival as a fundraiser for the Lab was a no-brainer. The iconic venue has been our home since the beginning and is, in my opinion, Northampton's best music venue. It hardly needs to be said that places like the Lab need protecting and are the heart of any community. We hope in some small way our little festival helps secure the future of the venue. It's been a labour of love putting it all together.

So yes, we have a lot to be proud of in the Collective and it really is a collective, None of this would be possible or sustainable without a lot of people doing a lot of things. We've gone from me telling Alex about a lyric in a Felt song to putting on our own gigs, establishing a great relationship with the Lab, writing this magazine, releasing CDs and hosting a three day festival. All in the space of a year and a half. It's been an exciting time for all of us and there's more to come!

What else? Geese (the band) are shit. Geese (the species of bird) are alright. Stop using AI. Enjoy Issue 9!!!

"There's a place for abstract and there's a place for noise. There's a place for every kind of sound so come on now and tell me why there's a void"
Lawrence



Thoughts Before Void Fest 2026

About 8 months ago, I had a thought. None of the bands I'm involved in (or was involved in at the time of the idea, RIP ÜLV) stood the slightest chance of playing Twinfest. As much as I love that festival, it does rather feel like the same acts end up playing it year after year, and when if comes to Northampton Music Festival, unless you're 'in' with the local BBC Introducing crew you may as well simply delete your application form. So what to do? The answer seemed natural and in line with our approach over the last 18 months - do it ourselves. No one putting us on? Create our own gigs! No one writing about us? Create our own magazine. Putting a festival felt like an obvious thing to do. I'd run them in the past, including the four night Unscene Festival in the late 90s in Dundee (where Snow Patrol had played to a room that couldn't fit more than 100 people in).
I put out some feelers, asked a few people if they'd be up for it, and before I had time to really consider the ramifications three nights were booked at the Lab, with two stages running each night. Bands applied to play, and we got an incredibly strong line-up.

But the fucking stress of it! As time has gone on I've more and more found myself wishing I'd dismissed the idea the moment I had it! It's hard work to arrange a festival, dealing with equipment, venue logistics, posters, promo, trying to get on the radio, trying to get on the TV... and that's before you factor in bands who don't seem to understand that the venue is small and, no, they can't really bring their entire backline for their half hour set if they're not willing to share it with the other bands playing the same evening.
At the time of writing, we have less than a week and a half to go. Ticket sales are picking up (thanks to my constant blitzing of social media and the bands playing reposting those posts), and I'm certain the venue will have been packed out when the final notes fade at the end of Saturday night. But I'm also having literal nightmares about the event, waking in the middle of the night wondering about how to manage traffic flow on the small narrow staircase, how to ensure the bands play without overrunning, how to deal with any unexpected problems or drunk attendees... I don't recall ever being so stressed about an event ever.
Anyway, at the back I've written how it all went... I hope it's not been a disaster!

Alex Botten

The Youth of Today

Jordan Jones shakes his fist at a cloud

I write this article of risk of sounding like a baby boomer, I grew up in an upper working class/lower middle class family. My family was very traditional, my father worked quite high up in multiple insurance companies, my mother worked two days a week at a bank and raised my younger brother and I. We were probably better off than some of my peers so money wasn't ever really an issue however I was always installed with a work ethic. Working hard gets you everywhere.

From the ages of 12 I was going to open mics, jamming with older musicians, or lunchtime rehearsals with people doing music at secondary school. I was made aware of NMPAT who at the time would put people my age into bands. They'd rehearse and do gigs at village festivals, or council run events. When I started playing in my earlier bands I'd be going into pubs in Duston and ask to run a young musicians night which gave me, and many others a place to play. From the age of 15 I went out as a solo acoustic act playing 2x45 minute sets for terribly low fees. But for someone aged 15 it was like winning the lottery. By the time I made it to Northampton College (mainly because I was told by my sixth form to not return!) I was a seasoned musician likewise as many of my peers.

Now it seems, to an outsider looking in, it seems many musicians now just go to Northampton College and form a band with very little experience of the outside world doing music. Some of the musicians are fantastic, however some I've seen need more time to improve and develop their skills; which is fine.

My biggest concern is the fact, why does it seem to me that so many musicians aren't grafting? When I was younger than them I was lugging around a PA that was bigger than me and taking abuse from people who've had too many pints of bitter. I partly blame the increase of social media. Musicians get big now from TikTok. Not getting their hands dirty. It's undeniable there's a lack of opportunity now for younger musicians apart from open mics so I can't blame them. But when I was younger it was work hard, get some cash, buy better gear, learn to be a gigging musician and driven by hunger to play live not social media and doing a gig half arsed with an out of tune Yamaha. I understand that music is a very expensive hobby, especially if you need to buy stuff like a PA, but work hard to invest in your art. Have some pride! Social media was used then as a place to find work and update a profile a picture when my mother took a nice photo of me looking a bit like a rock star on a digital camera.

To sum it up, musicians don't just wait to get to college to be in a band, get yourselves out there, use places such as Performing Room and ignore social media. Playing in a band is not a social media flex, it's who we are.

Not So Quiet Revolutionaries

On The Jank on the music industry, influences, and community

Who are On The Jank? And why that name?
We are Ollie and Mo. Two mates making bangin' dance tunes. Live beats keys and vocals. The name On the Jank kind of came up in conversation when we tried to describe our music.

What are your influences? Is there a particular musical era you're especially fond of? For me it's that early 80s period where post punk was happening, and no one really knew what pop music was supposed to sound like, so there was loads of experimentation.
Our influences come from all over.
Mo and I are both into our dance music of course. Mo grew up listening to a lot of 90s stuff from Jeff Buckley and Nick Drake to Underworld and Death in Vegas. I came into it through more modern dnb and techno. We have our own influences we've picked up along our very different journeys to get here; A lot of jazz and classical themes work their way in through me. A big influence for us as well is the actual gear itself that we use.
What sounds can we make with the cheap synths, analogue pedals and random instruments we have, and how can we get them to fit together?

Have algorithms ruined everything?
We felt this for while. But it seems like there's a shift where there's more and more great music coming out from different places.
Maybe there's a cycle happening, we gotta roll with it. Feels like people are fighting back and we're seeing a new wave of cool stuff.
The music hasn't stopped and nor will it!

If you could change something about the music industry what would it be?
Me and Mo had an existential crisis trying to answer this one! It's not easy climbing the ladder, trying to get yourself heard, trying to work with / fight against the modern world. Probably capitalism is not the best tool for the job but it's the one we've got. No real "quick fix" comes to mind, but if we work to support our local venues and artists, we think that's a good start!

Here at Notes From The Void we're consciously trying to recreate the excitement of the late 80's/early 90's music press, especially Melody Maker's golden era. Do you think the loss of the music press nationally has negatively impacted the way people interact with music? There don't seem to be any subcultures any more, and we suspect the loss of the weeklies has something to do with it.
People interact with music differently these days. The ability to share and access a huge variety of music has never been easier, but it seems we are losing some sense of community. Although, behind the scenes there is a quiet revolution brewing among those who celebrate being themselves.

What's next for On The Jank? Where can we hear more from you?
We've been toiling away on our debut album release so stay tuned.
But we think the best place to hear us is from the dance floor. We're playing in and around Northampton in the summer.
Looking forward to joining the A Void crew at the Lab on the 28th May. Check us out on instagram for more.

Brevity is the soul of wit

Decadence get straight to the point

Tell us who you are, and how you formed?
We are Decadence, a hard rock band formed in college.

Who are you influenced by?
Our influences come from bands such as Muse and Evanescence, we are inspired by their heavy riffs and powerful vocals.

You're a new name to a lot of our readers. What can they expect if they come to see you play?
People can expect a great performance from us as well as a great support band. We always make sure we give other bands chances to perform, as it's quite a struggle to get gigs for upcoming bands.

What has been your highlight playing in the band so far?
A highlight we all look back on is recording our debut single 'Come Forth', also winning at the Corby Music Awards

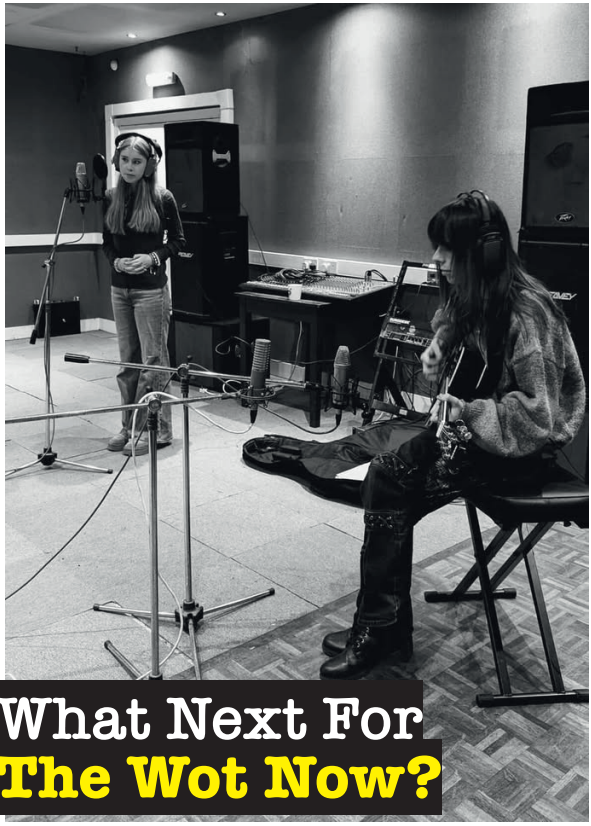
What do you regret doing? What do you wish you'd known when you started?
That Recording in a studio is much less hassle that trying to do it yourself.

What's next for the band?
More releases and more gigs.

https://www.instagram.com/decadencebanduk/

The Wot Now? will be a new name to a lot of people, tell us who you are, and how you came to start playing together.
We're a genre (and gender) confused alternative duo from Northamptonshire. We met through our shared hatred of football and refusing to go to our sibling's games when it rained. Six yapped Katie's ear off about production while she stood there trying to get a word in edgewise. It's been smooth sailing ever since.

What are your main influences? How would you sell yourselves to someone who has never heard you before?
Our influences are all over the place, but we're constantly listening to artists like Fleetwood Mac, Julia Wolf, Paramore and Tukay & Ryan. We're pretty deadpan and sarcastic, we don't take ourselves super seriously, but we will absolutely make you cry (from the bad jokes if not from the sad, loud songs.) If you feel like that's your kind of thing, we're the band for you.



What Next For The Wot Now?

Are either of you from marginalised groups? Have you found that's presented any barriers to the band?
I (six) tend to use my horrific sense of humour to bring attention to some serious real world stuff. As a trans woman, life is super spooky half the time, so that always makes it into the writing in one way or another. In terms of barriers though? Nah, we got a wicked song out of it. Go listen to Pray It Away.

What has been your musical highlight to date, playing in the band?
Last year, we got to play a pretty big festival at Santa Pod raceway called 'Bug Jam'. We were in the acoustic tent, and it was super wholesome to see everyone who was chilling out in there get up of the couches and seating to dance to our songs. We hung around after our set for a while too, and all the other bands that were playing were so incredibly kind and welcoming. It was great.

If you could do anything with the band, money and time no issue, what would it be?
I think our answer is the same as what any band wants. We'd love to play a world tour and get a bunch of charities involved. We've done a lot of work with non-profits like the Travers Foundation lately, and it's always super rewarding to know you're making art more accessible.

What's coming up next?
Well, where's the fun in just telling you? Keep an eye on the streaming services over the next few months, that's all we'll say!

https://www.instagram.com/thewotnow_/

MONSTER MOVIE

GODZELLA ROAR ONTO THE SCENE

Who are Godzella?
Godzella is an upcoming, alternative female-fronted band, taking influence from femme-punk, riot girl, and alternative rock. Our roots began in an indie rock soundscape, beginning with tracks from artists like the Stereophonics, Arctic Monkeys, and Blur, but we evolved to a heavier repertoire with songs by Kittie, Flyleaf, and Paramore. We also have began to write our own original tracks, create studio recordings, demos, and a music video.

How did you form?
Our singer had a gig opportunity at the Performing Room in town, and asked her friends, and fellow music students with similar music taste to be in a band. We have grown together as individuals and musicians, and developed our collaborative skills over the past 5 months.

Many college bands break up at the end of the year, are you going to keep going or do we need to accept that you're like a mayfly and that every show will be part of a strictly limited whole? To be honest, it would be a shame for such a good band name to be used for only a short time!
We still have another year of college together, and want to develop our work further until we all go to university. We would love to stay together in the years after college, but we have all have a widespread plan for where we would like to be for university and college.

What has been your proudest moment in the band so far?
Getting our own gigs outside of college so far has been such an exciting opportunity for us! Our first gig at the Performing Room was sold out, which was such an amazing feeling for us all! Another example is when we recently supported another local band, AXO, at the Mikado Pheasant in Kettering.

What's next? Where can we learn more?
Our next gigs are performing at the Roadmender on the 14th of May with college, and the 28th of May at the Lab. We are very excited to release our own music soon after we finish the recording process too! We plan on keeping our social media pages updated throughout the process.

https://www.instagram.com/godzella.band/

Hail To The Chiefs

Broken Castles put the top job in their sights

For people who haven't a clue who you are, tell us about yourselves
Forged in the fires of Mount... just kidding, we're three guys that love music and making a general racket. Broken Castles is catharsis and fun with minimal respect for social boundaries.

Why should people come and see you at the Lab in July
Well, it's either that or confront the ever-present existential dread of living in a time where a reality TV host shapes the destiny of the modern world via lies, corruption and idiocy. At a Broken Castles show we welcome love and respect with a healthy dose of sarcasm, Dire Straits and rock-and-roll abandon. Sounds like you? You'll be among friends.

What has been your greatest achievement so far? What are you most proud of?
Honestly? Just being unashamedly proud of who we are and giving people a good time. We're doing this for fun and that, combined with a deep-seated love of live music and something real, is what pushes us forward. We've got jobs and families and lives like everyone else, but Broken Castles is where we can express ourselves to the fullest extent, so we're proud to have that opportunity every time we play, and we never take it for granted.

What has been your lowest point?
The realisation that we are in fact getting older and that's fine because life is what you make it, but at the same time, Wagonwheels are definitely smaller than they used to be.

What's next for Broken Castles?
World domination, the Presidency of the United States, and we've just got funding for an AI startup. But seriously, an album! It's always been the dream, and we've got new material we want to share with the world, whether they want it or not.

brokencastles.bandcamp.com/

POETRY

Support Band

It's a sick joy we feel
Watching you exposed
outside of your London bubble
If clichéd rock act
windmills to an empty room
Did it happen?
Other bands and a scattered few
bear witness to a sorry scene
Polite applause and a hollow whoop
Is all you get

And yet
We'd kill for a bubble
Instead of this frayed blanket
of distorted sound
A flea on the back of a bloodless dog
We're duty bound to run you down
and wish you in the ground

Integrity, huh?

Sustained by a promise
of future immortality
We instead live on poison
and thrive in a vacuum
Never stopping to hear
the silence that stings
Or pausing to think of
what success brings

It's no way to be

Later, outside
we exchange the words:
"You were great" and
"You were too"
Much worse than lies since we wish it
were true

Andrew Slack

Hushed

If you're making music
Here's some useful guidance
Make sure that it's heartfelt,
Cos there's nothing wrong with silence

Russell Heyworth

GEAR CHAT

We asked the incredible noise rock trio **Oscillator** what their favourite gear is.

Charlie: My favourite pedal on the board is the **Death by Audio Apocalypse**, Ive pretty much used it on just about everything but it sounds great on bass, Another favourite is the **Earthquaker Devices Avalanche Run**, another pedal that been on everything but currently used on vocals, it's absolutely battered and the lights don't work but sounds great so wouldn't change it!

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do

High Maintenance may have lost their guitarists, but they're not stopping

Band photos by Joe Benton (this page) and @libbyarcs (cover)

***High Maintenance**, it's the kind of name that makes you wonder why anyone would choose it. It sounds needy, demanding, requiring constant upkeep. But then you realise that High Maintenance is another all-female band that's emerged from Leicester's febrile punk scene, and that the name is a provocation, using an insult often aimed at women to brand art made by women. This is a consciously picked name, a thought-through moniker that throws the insult back in the face of the listener and any men who might have used it over the years. We wanted to know more, so we sent them some questions.*

You formed as part of Leicester's Riotous Collective initiative. What was your experience of going through the workshops?

Em: I've always been compelled to tinker around making music - I've had stints collaborating with others - but since having kids some years ago, that had fallen by the wayside. When I read about Riotous Collective, I knew I had to get involved and rekindle making a noise with other people. I was really nervous as I had lost a lot of confidence - musically and in general. From the off, that lack of confidence quickly lifted. This is thanks to the hugely supportive and encouraging nature of this amazing bunch of women. Getting involved in Riotous Collective is undoubtedly the best thing I've done in the last 20 years.

Mell: I had wanted to be in a band for as long as I can remember; something about playing music collectively has always appealed to me. When I first went on the drum kit, I had only had a few lessons and had never played in front of a group before, so it was quite overwhelming yet awe-inspiring.

Jen: I was friends with Ruth Miller and actually performed some musical improv at a launch event for the original Unglamorous Project. I always thought getting involved with a band in Leicester wouldn't be possible, and I engaged by occasionally attending gigs. After we sadly lost Ruth, and the new Riotous Collective was formed, I just felt that it was time. I absolutely loved it, and the travelling was no sacrifice for the exchange. I'd never picked up a bass guitar before, but here I am singing and playing in a band!

At what point did you think 'we're good, we should keep doing this'?

Mell: I never had a 'we're good' moment, but more of a "I love this and want to keep doing it forever"

Em: From the very beginning, week by week, it was clear to me that great things would grow from this bunch of women with the enthusiasm, willingness to give things a go and the determination to have a good time - and support one another. I knew this was something I wanted to stick at and I had the faith that High Maintenance would create a sound we'd be proud of - which is exactly what's happened.

Jen: Right from the start. Once we'd played the women's day gig, we were invited to support the wonderful Dopamine Crash. The question of whether or not to continue never crossed my mind!

Who are the members of the band? What are you playing?

Jen: bass and vocals , Mell: drums , Em: keys and melodica . Sadly, our two amazing guitarists had to step back, so we are thrilled to have the wonderful Kitt and Hal from the Riotous Collective helping out until we find some new permanent members.

Did any of you play before you got involved in Riotous?

Em: Under the moniker of Vitamin M, I played melodica and collaborated with DJ Dick Dutch to put on Dubsomanic dub events - mostly at Leicester's much-missed Princess Charlotte. I also guested for Vibronics dub outfit, who are still going strong. I did many gigs over a decade or so - mostly in the UK. Cut a few records too. It was a lot

of fun - but it was a very male-dominated scene - and I often felt intimidated and not confident to be my true self. This experience with High Maintenance and the Riotous Collective is much more confidence-inducing!
Jen: I was the singer and lyricist in a grunge band called Drowning Girl, aged about 18. We were fairly short-lived but I did perfect my screamy bits

Jen, you're in a bit of a unique position, having feet in both the Leicester and Northampton music scenes, which are your favourite bands from both at the moment?

Jen: Aargh! tricky question. I want to name them all. But I think seeing Boilers up there inspired me to get involved in the first place. The new cohort of Riotous bands is brilliant, and you should definitely check them out. As for Northampton bands, well I'm a big fan of 72% ... absolutely incredible musicianship and noise My shoegazing side is loving House of Cats ... female bass player, yes please! Really love the nights that A Void Collective is putting on, as it is really bringing some interesting acts to the stage.

What would High Maintenance do if you could do anything? What are your most outlandish dreams for the band?

Em Headline, an all-women and non-binary music festival
Jen: Tour the world and inspire older women and nonbinary folk to get involved in music.
Mell: I think HM deserve to open for Madonna. She is an important inspiration for women of our age; she has changed the world, plus we do a pretty nifty cover of hers. Failing that, supporting Kasabian makes sense, given that they are also from Leicester and are practically my neighbours.

Highlight of musical journey so far?

Mell: The highlight for me has been organising the RC Reunion gig last year, where we got the 2025 cohort back together, six months after that year's IWD. The place was jumping and the atmosphere was everything I would have dreamed of - women celebrating women.
Em : The International Women's Day events. And just generally meeting such a fantastic group of like-minded people.
Jen: Playing the Boilerverse Christmas party was a brilliant experience. We did a punked-up version of "Little Donkey"! But tbh every moment of this journey is amazing. I just live for the weekends, jamming, writing and performing!

Lowlight, what do you wish you had not done?

Em: I wish I had not learned the hard way that it's wise to carry a spare power supply for my keyboard.
Jen: None so far! I'm loving it! I did plug my bass briefly into the guitar amp and felt a bit daft, but the sound engineer was very gracious.
Mell: No low lights, zero regrets. Except for the righteous anger I felt when one of our fellow bands got their song ripped off by the BBC, and someone made a drama out of our lives with zero accreditation, but we rode on the coattails of that, and in retrospect, it's only served the cause.

Who has been the nicest band you have met?

Mell: Every single band in the Riotous Collective is delightful bar none. Love love love working with our fellow females
Em: There is no single answer to this. Honestly, every single band we have gigged with have been nothing but friendly and supportive. I love them all!
Jen: What she said, but I do consider Boilers and Velvet Crisis to be our wiser sisters. The community is just brilliant. It goes beyond just music. We are sisters.

Have you recorded anything yet? If not, why? You need to get on that!

Not yet, we have been told by several folks that we should and are saving up to do a session. Again, many of our riotous sisters are now recording stuff, so we are not short of support and advice.

Any horror stories?

Mell: The first gig we did, I got a little overwhelmed when I thought the stage was on fire. No one told me the smoke machine was going to go off right next to me. I didn't expect to be able to see the drum kit I'm trying to hit in semi-darkness, and I thought I was having a seizure when the lights were dazzling my eyes, turning everything red and green. When I'm nervous or overexcited, I tend to play fast, and the band are absolute legends in keeping up with me.

What's next for the band?

Writing new material, recording and playing the heck out of the Midlands and beyond!

There's a real feeling of excitement at the grassroots music level at the moment, despite the loss of multiple venues across the country. It feels like a lot of us who came of age reading the golden era of Melody Maker, NME, and Sounds are forming bands and trying to bring that kind of writing and scene back. Do you agree?

Mell: Yes, we are the midlife version of Elastica.
Jen: Yes, I absolutely agree. We need to keep supporting our venues and grassroots ventures rather than just reunion events for bands that perhaps don't need our disposable income (if we are lucky enough to have any). I would urge everyone to get out there and relive the halcyon days of the 90s.
Em: I love this Q+A format, it's like the music mags from the 80s!

Job done!

High Maintenance play the Lab on May 28th

REVIEWS

We take a look at recent releases from across Shoetown and beyond

LIVE

Bio-Exile

The Lab, 27/03/26

Bio-Exile are a band who could credibly claim the crown of 'best rock act' in Northampton. Over the last year, local audiences have seen the quintet go from strength to strength. Tonight is no different, as the immensely confident performance attests. Like **The Monkees**, Bio-Exile have set of distinct personalities, and they kill the social media game. Luckily, their songs are good enough to add real substance to the style, blending melodic hard rock, some crunk-esque screaming, and even rap. Frontman Kieran prowls the stage in a way that reminds me of no-one so much as **Clint Mansell** during **Pop Will Eat Itself**'s peak at the end of the 80s. The comparison is appropriate, as while Bio-Exile don't have the samples and thumping dance beats of PWEI, they have that sense of mischief that was such a charming part of Stourbridge's favourite sons. Don't miss them next time you see their name on a poster, Bio-Exile are headed for the top. (AB)

Boilers

The Lab, 26/03/26

Headlining a very busy night at The Lab, following sets from **Emmi Fortune**, **House of Cats**, and the very promising youngsters **Opal** (joined for one song by local singer and online influencer **Jamie Benkert**), **Boilers** took only 21 minutes to show why they were top of the bill. Born from Leicester's Riotous Collective, the trio of Barbe, Fish, and Whizzy, charmed everyone in the room with their short sharp slabs of socially conscious punk. Never self-important, Boilers had the audience singing along to blink-and-you'll-miss-them songs about the need for big dinners, how they've got your back if you're in need, and loudly proclaimed demands for access to HRT. You can see why the writers of BBC drama *'Riot Women'* stole so liberally from them. Here's hoping they return soon. (AB)

SINGLES

For I The Badger *"Luchador"*
Lincoln's (we think) For I The Badger follow up "All Hail" with another urgent post-punk polemic which would have been probably spun at the wrong speed by John Peel if he was still around. FITB are angry, heavy, shouting from the rooftops about how unendingly shit everything is, and it's fucking *glorious*. (AB)

The Sydneys *"Doctor Man"*
I'm a fan of the current pre-ladrock indie revival, music from the '86-'92 era of obscure 7"s in photocopied sleeves that you'd find in local record stores, serving as windows into an unknown town's scene. The more bands that channel early Teenage Fanclub and BMX Bandits the better in my book. The Sydneys, from Leicester, have nailed a sound that's simultaneously retro and brand new in "Doctor Man" and it's b-side "Ugly Head". The lead track leans into a ramshackle Smudge/TFC vibe (with a burst of Dino Jr soloing) while the flip reminds me of They Might Be Giants. Great stuff. (AB)

Rough Pup *"Something To Say"*
A brand new trio, straight out of Peterborough, Rough Pup's debut EP opens with a wonderful gem of a short instrumental before the vocals of "Better Days' make their entrance demanding that they "just want to be heard". There's nothing astonishingly original here, but is that even possible these days? With millions of songs uploaded to streaming every 24 hours it's victory enough to make music that will get a local audience singing along while they bounce into a sweaty mess. "Something To Say' is a four song masterclass in making heartfelt music that sounds like you've heard it a million times before, in the most comforting way. Merzbow it is not, popular it undoubtedly will be. (AB)

Tiebreak *"Makeshift"*
Gossamer pop from one of the seemingly endless stream of local bands who claim to be influenced by The Cure just because they own a chorus pedal. While Tiebreak are better than most, I can't help but wish that "Makeshift" had a better mix, as it's missing almost all bottom end resulting in a sound that would blow away in a mild breeze. Musically, Tiebreak's debut is a tuneful three minutes with elements of U2, Big Country (at their least bagpipe-y) and Then Jericho married to a big dollop of mainstream pop. Confusingly, other tracks by Tiebreak on Tidal appear to be by a Norwegian hardcore band who got to the name 30 years ago and are still active. Given time, and a name change, Tiebreak (Tiebreak UK?) could end up being brilliant. (AB)

cjb *"Mourningdove"*
You know cjb better as Headswitcher bassist Callum John Brown, and you're almost certainly imagining his eight song solo EP to be akin to Duff McKagan's 1993 outing "Believe in Me". You'd be wrong; "Mourningdove" is a patchwork of samples, pastoral beats (occasionally erupting into breakcore), & cracked synths, while any guitars that do appear are either mangled beyond all recognition or acoustic. "Slow Times" hints at how this could be performed live when live drums appear. As surprising as when JJ Burnel dropped "Euroman Cometh" at the peak of the Stranglers popularity (AB)

Latent Dream *"Wonder"*
Struggling to find a new song for your summer playlist? Then look no further! Drawing inspiration from Coldplay with its chiming guitar intro, "Wonder" builds up to an anthemic chorus that will get you on your feet. I loved Rob's drum work, especially in the bridge where he unleashes a series of drum fills that showcase his technical abilities. Overall, "Wonder" is Latent Dream's best track yet and a must listen for fans of indie rock. (LS)

Bloody/bath *"Faith"*
Bloody/bath are back with another message from their heart of darkness, delivered in Kailan's now familar low register bark. The rhythm section anchors guitars that want to break free and take flight, like a blackhole holding everything in place. Bloody/bath sound more and more like a goth band with every release, and I for one am all for it (AB)

Billy Crawford *"If Only"*
I don't know when or if this is going to be released, but it's too good to let pass. Billy Crawford's debut is a brilliant mix of jangle pop and folk, calling to mind R.E.M. backing Billy Bragg via The Proclaimers. Fleshed out from his solo acoustic performances with guitar by Dave at Plastic Tree Studios, and a very Mike Mills bassline perfectly performed by former ÜLV bassist Steve Torrie. Everything about "If Only" works and it deserves to be heard far and wide. (AB)

ALBUMS

Burning Ships *"Burning Ships"*
It starts with the loud hum of an amp, which then becomes a thick fuzzed bass line over clattering percussion and guitar right at the edge of pushing everything into the red. Then the wah comes in, not your Nile Rogers style funky quack, more a biting sweeping roar. 4 minutes into the 13 minute opening track, "2026: A Jam Odessey" the whole band lifts off into a corrosive wall of thick fuzz. Think Slift during their wilder instrumental passages, or the German improv supergroup Krautfuzz (especially their collaboration with J Mascis), but louder. Each time you think it can't get more saturated it somehow does, eventually collapsing into a black hole of crushed tremolo guitar and tortured bass. Burning Ships debut is one of those albums that runs track into track, demanding the listener keep listening, forcing them to go along for the duration of the ride. An album where texture and monstrously loud guitars rule, you can be certain this isn't the polite post-rock of Mogwai and that it's going to sound immense live. If ever an album begged to be released by Fuzz Club Records on thick void black vinyl, this is it. Essential listening. (AB)

White Marble Statues *"White Marble Statues"*
Psychedelic whimsy from Corby, recorded over a number of years and now finally seeing a release. Across 21 tracks and an hour of music you'll find a lot to like, especially if you're plugged into the vibes the much missed Ptolemaic Terrascope used to cover. Fans of Syd era Floyd, the Elephant Six collective, Phil Elvrum's early cassette experiements in The Microphones, Pop-Off Tuesdays, and even 90's Brummie Francophiles L'Augmentation will be right at home in this sprawling epic. Whether any of this will ever be performed live is another thing, but that hardly matters. Hopefully, White Marble Statues won't take more than a decade to write, record, and release the follow-up. (AB)

LIVE
Dead Leaves
The Lab, 07/08/26

Some bands are monumental arseholes. They measure every show they play, every interaction they have, by how it can benefit them and them alone. They treat everything as transactional, always weighing up whether the transaction will be in their favour. Sometimes they try to change things to further their specific goals. Then there are bands who are the opposite, who embrace community, who realise that when one wins, we can leverage that so that we all win. Dead Leaves are firmly in the latter category.
Linked to the Socks On label in Peterborough, a group of musicians working tirelessly to build up their local community in the fens, Dead Leaves are a genuinely warm and, well, lovely bunch of people. If I were one of *those* journalists, I'd now write a lengthy screed attacking them, while repeatedly moaning that it was so *hard* because they're so nice. I'm not, though, and Dead Leaves were immense at the Lab on the opening night of Voidfest.
Playing a stacked bill that also included The Good Fridays, Marabar Caves, Cheap Bleach, and Megaphoney, as well as a showcase of young Leicester bands on the second stage, Dead Leaves turned in half an hour of perfect fuzz-tinged melodic rock.
Here at Notes From The Void, we've reviewed their single releases and loved every one of them, and each translated live perfectly. Dead Leaves are a band pushing against the prevalent 'shout over angular guitars' thing that's so common these days, instead leaning into melody, harmony, and huge tunes all delivered at ear-shredding volume. Opening with 'We Are Dust', a former single and now lead track on their newly released 'Apropos of Nothing' EP, their half-hour set was a master class in how to grab an audience and hold them. Go and buy the EP from their Bandcamp right now, and don't miss them next time we have them over for a Northampton show. (photo and words AB)

Sunset Images, Oscillator, Cheap Bleach, wülvs, The Lab, 08/04/2026

Four bands played tonight, but I'm only going to review three of them. Why? Because I'm in **wülvs** and it would be weird to review the band I'm in. I'll say this though, it was our second show, first one back playing through loud amps onstage, and it was a fun noisy chaos for me and Andrew,

Cheap Bleach have been playing for a while, and their polished punky pop was delivered effortlessly. They clearly know what they're doing, and even with borrowed gear they sounded like themselves, the guitars biting, the bass moving the floor, the drums pummelling. They do that shouted-vocals-unharmony thing really well, and were clearly an early favourite of the small but appreciative crowd. They've had a steady run of strong singles recently, and with a year having passed since they released their "Become Nature" EP, it's surely time for the band to release another, or maybe go for that debut album. Come on, young bands! Release albums!

Oscillator have an album in the can, ready to release later in the year, and there's simply no way that it'll be anything other than incredible. For me, they're probably the best band in Northampton right now, possibly tied with Piss Shivers. Tonight they were back at their best, after an oddly muted set opening for Sunflowers a couple of months ago. Tom's drums provided a groove that a lot of their peers lack, while vocalist Charlie's bass was a roar that moved the floor and the walls. While Charlie draws the most attention, bouncing around the stage with a huge gleeful smile for most of the set, credit has to be given to guitarist Jake, calmly conjuring out walls of smeared reverb-drenched fuzz. His guitar sound is incredible, and I feel like he should be given more recognition. It's staggering that local audiences aren't coming out in huge numbers when they play.

Last up, all the way from Mexico, were **Sunset Images**. Playing a set that drew heavily from their recent Dedstrange Records release "Oscilador" and its predecessor "NADA / CERO / INFINITO", the trio calmly went about rearranging the foundations of the Lab in a performance that several attendees commented was the loudest thing they'd ever heard there. Bathed in red light, and often hidden in a blanket of smoke, Samuel Osorio's long running project, alongside Aldonza on bass and **Grave/Mal** drummer Ali are one of those groups that inspires people to go away and form their own bands, or turn up their guitars. The bass was an enveloping blanket of sound, with live drums locking into sections of drum machine driven noise. Over the top of it all, Samuel's Jaguar spat out massively loud fuzz and grit, while a DBA Echo Master mangled his vocals into the perfect psychrock soundtrack.

When we got home, Cheryl was buzzing with excitement, and at the next House of Cats rehearsal her bass was noticeably louder. That's the Sunset Images effect, right there. (photos and words AB)

REWIND

We look back at releases from before our 1st issue

Bad Apes *"Notes Towards A Mental Breakdown"* (First released 2012)
Hailing from the other Hampton, Wolvehampton, Bad Apes are one of probably countless bands that have existed who barely made a splash locally, let alone nationally. Listening to their only 'proper' release, "Notes Towards A Mental Breakdown" reveals a noisy trio who were most likely just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Ten years later and their A Place To Bury Strangers meets My Bloody Valentine by way of some distinctly Black Country humour noise rock would have seen them getting shows up and down the country and regular BBC Introducing radio play. Alas, it wasn't to be, and they popped out in the wrong era, cursed with inevitable obscurity. The EP has some neat little interstitial sections with titles referencing the mysterious Toynbee Tiles that first appeared glued to pavements in Philadelphia in the 80s, while the longer tracks hint at a future for the band that never came. *https://badapes.bandcamp.com/* (AB)

Linda Jardin *"60 Miles By Road or Rail"* (First released 1980)
Hard to even fathom this oddity passing the 'vague whim' barrier, let alone making it all the way to 7" vinyl and kitch infamy. The early 80s were seemingly a different world and the Northampton Development Corporation clearly had money to burn if they thought roping one of the vocalists from Buggles into voicing this profoundly peculiar paean to an unknown lover who happened to live in 'Northampton, middle England' was in any way a good idea. Technically, "60 miles...." is the b-side, though it shares the exact same tune and melody as the a-side, "Energy In Northampton". If you think "60 Miles..." was weird, just wait until you hear this story of beings from another world 'needing help from the human race', finding that the 'energy and technology' they require exists (for reasons never explained) in 'Northampton, middle England!'. Much like the flipside, the story itself remains unresolved. We're left wondering about the longevity of the relationship that requires constant trips up and down the M1 from the dull back water of (checks notes) London to the bright lights of the cosmopolitan hotspots of Gold Street and Abington Grove, just as we're left hanging with the outcome of the 'neutron war' that's caused our intergalactic visitors to silently arive at the glowing lights of St. James, Duston, and Riverside as space refugees fleeing conflict. While we know that the aliens successfully made it to Northampton as their ship broke up in orbit (or successfully landed, the narrative is a bit muddy here) it doesn't tell us if they ended up at the receiving end of a beating by the xenophobic National Front who were still at the peak of their racist strength in 1980. We're left to believe the aliens settled in Shoetown, which is simply put, fucking weird. (AB)

The All New Adventure of Us
"Best Loved Goodnight Tales"
(First released 2008)

TANAOU had spent six years evolving from a bunch of spiky emo fraggles to Northampton's finest singing storytellers by the time they released their only album in 2008. Built around the literate, nostalgic lyricism of Jaime Macefield and Kate Williams, the seven-piece band delivered lush, engrossing songs about childhood escapades and the joy of making music, with copious references to The Wizard of Oz. We're not in Kansas anymore.

Released on double LP via their own Good Guys Wear Black label, the album was reissued by One Little Indian on CD with a slightly altered tracklist. The new hidden track on the CD is a great addition, but this is one of those releases that makes most sense over four sides of vinyl - each side has its own title and feel, with a narrative development from the catchy pop songs on the first disc to the second's sublime epic tracks and noisy, chaotic swirl.

While at times teetering on the edge of tweeness - for heaven's sake, one song is called *"Me, Me, Me," Said The Kite Eating Tree; As He Took Breakfast From Little Katy* – they ultimately charm their way to your heart. *St. Crispin's Got Our Backs* is a coy love letter to Northampton ("our hometown's not that bad"), while *45 Forever* celebrates having a record bag full of your mates' releases – something the members of A Void Collective will surely agree with.

It's the two songs on the third side that form the album's emotional centrepiece. The deceptively gentle beginning of *Löftet's Grand* leads to a devastating crescendo, followed by a brief instrumental interlude and the anthemic, arms-aloft *Medicine*. By the time you've reached the end of side four, wrung out and wide-eyed, you'll want to head straight back to the beginning.

Click click, there's no place like home. (DA)

discogs.com/sell/list?master_id=380605

Who are Boilermen? How did you form?
We are Pete Barnden, guitar; Chris Evans, drums and vocals; and Steve Escott, bass and vocals. We are an art punk band from Leicester.
We formed when Boilers (our partners) pointed at us. We used to meet up after their rehearsals, and after a few months, they went "*You're a drummer, you're a bass player, you're a guitarist, you're going to be a band, and you're going to be called Boilermen.*" We had no choice. It was fate and a lot of crisps.
They did all the hard work. Choose the name, found the people. Boilers plotted it.
We drifted around for a bit without any idea of what we were doing, covering the odd, odd cover. Then we saw one of Chris' other bands, the magnificent Model Workers, and we decided we were going to have to try a bit harder if we were going to keep his interest. So far, it seems to have worked.
Our experience as musicians goes from less than five years to more than 50. It's Pete's first band. Steve has never sung in the band, so it's keeping the newness, the unknown, that grit in the oyster. That wouldn't have been there if we'd all been seasoned / marinated old musicians. The ability to surprise ourselves is vitally important.

Listen to the voice of Buddha
Being Boiled with Boilermen

You're linked to the Leicester Riotous Collective. What has been its influence on the city?
Riotous Collective (formerly Unglamorous Music) has had an extraordinary effect on music in Leicester. The project encourages older women to start bands, and around 35 bands have started up in the city. Around 25 of these gig regularly, and new ones come along every year. This means about 100+ musicians and allies as a potential audience. Every gig has more people in attendance, there is a more diverse audience, more women at gigs, and gigs are becoming a safe place. The scene gives agency to the younger, diverse bands as well. The joy of watching people's first gigs is just extraordinary. Because of the way Ruth Miller initially organised the workshops, there is a direct line from idea to song, to stage, which has a visceral power which occasionally man bands miss. Every year, there are new bands that you look at and go, "*That's brilliant, that's a new way of saying that*" The bands are always more than the sum of their parts. They never fail to be interesting, and failing to be interesting is the biggest sin in bands.

Who are your influences? How would you describe yourselves to people who are coming to you for the first time?
Influences, in no particular order: Shoegaze, Grunge, early 80's post punk, anarcho punk, Dead Kennedys, The 3 Johns, Wire, Magazine, The Residents, early 70's German bands. We are a loud, fast band who, in a slightly parallel universe, believe we write the best pop songs in the world.

We loved your debut album. What is your favourite moment on it?
Thank you. We love it too, and we're getting a lot of great feedback on it. Steve really likes the sleeve. The work Chris Ilett put into the mixing cannot be overemphasised. We gave him free rein. When it came back to us, it was a bit of an "*ohh, is that us?*" moment. We all like it all, but if push comes to shove, we'd have to choose Chris' spoken word bits on A 1000 Words.

Is there anything you wish you'd done differently as a band?
There is a quote from John Barrymore, an early 20th-century actor, which goes "*One is not really old till regrets take the place of dreams*". If you talk to any musician who has been at it for a while, they will have an 'if only' story. This is one of the joys of forming the band when we have nothing to prove. Music is much too important to be taken seriously.

What's next for Boilermen?
What's next? More hanging on Boilers' coat tails, using their wit, talent and rage to drag us a little further. But most importantly, we want to surprise and entertain ourselves and the people who listen to us; once we stop doing that, we will stop. Abruptly. Like many of our songs.

https://boilermen.bandcamp.com/

Bastard's Soirée

Joy Disposal Unit are in a scrapping mood

You've been playing a lot of shows over the last couple of years, what led to this sudden resurgence in JDU activity?
Simon: We've learned to beg like dogs. I think after we got a little bit of exposure from the first handful of gigs and AVC, people thought we were semi serious and were willing to put us on, so it's probably down to that.

A lot of people will have heard you at our show, or on local radio, but for the half dozen who haven't, how would you describe the band?
Simon: We try and sound like a post punk noise pop band. Whether we do or not I don't know. We've been asked if we like The Fall after we've played a few times, also Interpol and weirdly MGMT. But I don't think we sound anything like MGMT, we certainly don't try to. But we don't particularly take ourselves too seriously. We try to combine this moody punk music with quirky lyrics about bus drivers and Wetherspoons.
Andrew: All of the above. I always say we sound like 80s indie with noise rock elements. We're shambolic, clueless at times but very punctual.

If you had to fight another frontman, and I mean absolutely had to, who would win between Simon and Jordan Jones of the Keepers?
Simon: I think people underestimate mine and Jordans combat prowess actually. I legit trained as a professional wrestler so I know how to fight fake really well. Whatever the result the streets of Northampton would be a sea of blood and ripped corduroy.

Why haven't you released an album yet? Is it because you're lazy?
Simon: Haha. We aren't that lazy. We've got probably over 10 more nearly completed recordings and I've got loads on my 8 track. We're a fucking nightmare though. One of us always has an issue with something and we end up redoing it. It's like that scene in Father Ted where there's a dent in his car and he's trying to fix it, cut to an hour later and the car is an absolute wreck. That's what happens when we record. Like there's two songs Bastard's Soiree and ...Kraken, I really like them when we play them live, we have at least 3 recordings of them each and I don't think we've managed to do them justice in the studio. Though we came close with Soiree once didn't we Alex?

I've heard on the grape vine that six song EPs are where it's at. Is this true?
Andrew: I've been saying this a lot and it might be true. I was thinking that since no one makes albums anymore and attention spans are pretty short then the 6 Track EP/mini album might be the solution. Simon and I are big fans of Thelema by Murder City Devils. See also Super Fuzz Big Muff by Mudhoney and Smell The Magic by L7.

You've been recording recently, will the songs be released?
Andrew: They're already in the bin. We're like a band consisting of Lee Mavers, Brian Wilson, Kevin Shields and Phil Spector, endlessly arguing over sounds that can't be heard. The EP was going to be called "Banquet!" but it may have been downgraded to a morsel.
Simon: We are gonna release "Banquet!", it's not past tense just yet.

You're throwing a party and must invite a bastard. Who is it?
Simon: I'd invite Jacob Rees-Mogg but he's only allowed to drink gravel. And if he doesn't like that he can leave.

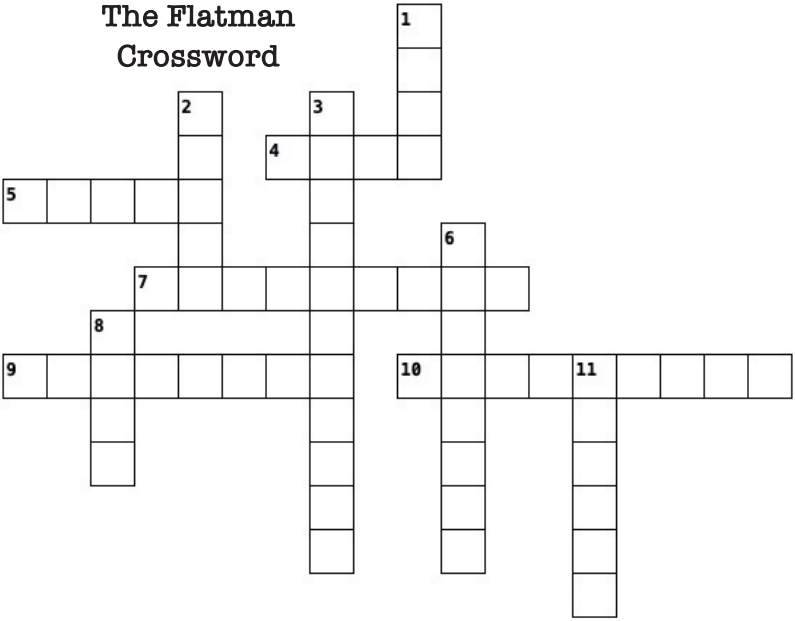
Lastly, who are your favourite local bands?
Andrew: For me it's Oscillator and Piss Shivers. Bio-Exile, Headswitcher and Moonhaze are great. They're not my kind of music but they all look and sound like proper bands. I think we all like Bauhaus.
Simon: I quite like Beings and Skybeard.

joydisposalunit.bandcamp.com/

They say a picture paints a thousand words, so rather than write about what Voidfest was like, here's some photos. The whole thing was less chaotic than I feared, and I was on the TV, which was nice - Alex.

Bollocks at the Back

The Flatman Crossword



Across

4. Current female singer demanding to know the whereabouts of spouse (4)

5. Noddy Holder and company (5)

7. Sam Fender song regarding mouth drooling doppelganger (4,2,3)

9. Avian imprisonment via Primal Scream song (8)

10. White Stripes single delivers disgusting punch (4,5)

Down

1. Des'ree single in file (4)

2. Marion single induces slumber (5)

3. Mock Turtles query soil density? (3,3,3,2)

6. When bathing, TLC demand you don't wash them too hard (2,6)

8. Garbage single derived from cow (4)

11. The Doors prophesise finality (3,3)

Find Your Way Into The Future With Our Horoscopes by

Mercator Projectum

Terry Kinesis is on holiday

Aries (March 21 - Apr 20)
Sod off. For your own sake and everyone else around you.

Taurus (Apr 21 - May 21)
You may be experiencing personal change and visions of grandeur. You feel compelled to get AI to produce drab music that even Simon Cowell would hate. Don't do this.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)
You feel stuck. Despite being the frontman and songwriter of your own band you have a desire to start a solo project that's even more boring yet promises fame. Exercise caution.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)
You're feeling emotional this month and your recent discovery of Bob Dylan's Blood On The Tracks has inspired you to write an unlistenable heartbreak ballad. She dumped you, man. Get over it.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)
You crave attention and think that joining local band, The Keepers is your ticket to fame. Foolishness! You will contribute absolutely nothing and get the boot.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)
You are a perfectionist. No one can tell the difference between mix 47 and 48. Step away from the computer, eat something and for gods sake, have a shower.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)
You can't make a decision. Your last Facebook post is still "big news coming soon" since January 2023. Shit or get off the pot!

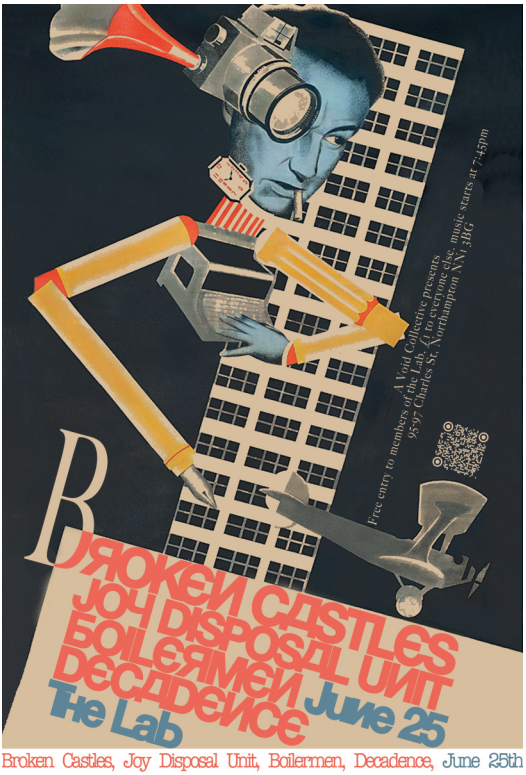
Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
Being born around Halloween does not make you the best thing since Robert Smith. Be humble and go and get some sunlight. Your mother is concerned.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)
You're feeling the need to experiment with your sound. No one has ever asked for Progressive Hip Jazz. Fire that flute player and go back to your acoustic guitar.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 20)
Actually, put down the acoustic guitar and stop playing Elliot Smith songs at open mics. It's a bleak enough time of year already. The punters don't need this.

Aquarius (Jan 21 – Feb 19)
You think you're misunderstood?! Tell me about it. Truthfully no one understands songs in an 11/8 time signature - it's the reason no one comes to your gigs. Go back to basics.

Pisces (Feb 20 – March 20)
You're a manic pixie dream girl and look like how The Sundays sound. Break his heart and inspire more dream pop sad boy music. We thank you for your service.


Broken Castles
Joy Disposal Unit
Boilermen
Decadence
June 25
The Lab
Free entry to members of the Lab. £1 to everyone else, music starts at 7:45pm
A Void Collective presents
35-37 Charles St, Northampton NN1 2JG

Broken Castles, Joy Disposal Unit, Boilermen, Decadence, June 25th

We can only keep doing this if you keep coming and supporting the bands. The shows are free, tell your friends! Tell your mum! Tell your work colleagues! Northampton has amazing things going on! Not only are we doing stuff but there's **Picky New Promotions**, and **Hushed**, and **Sketchhead**, and **SBD**. Things are happening! Don't miss out!

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